

Fly Jamaica ready to soar!

After 14 months of working assiduously to meet rigorous regulatory aviation requirements, Fly Jamaica Airways will officially take to the skies on Friday, January 25, with its inaugural flight scheduled to depart for the John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York.

Fly Jamaica Airways received its air operating certificate in September 2012 from the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority (JCAA). The certificate is its licence to operate as an airline. In late December 2011, the airline received clearance from authorities in the United States, which determined that the airline has the capital to operate and just two weeks ago, Fly Jamaica finalised its operating schedules out of JFK. Chief Operating Officer Captain Lloyd Tai said the response to the new airline has been overwhelming. "We have completed all the technical and commercial requirements. We are new and had to get accustomed to interfacing with the American system. The United States had to ensure that we were 100 per cent compliant," Tai said. Tai said the airline will offer convenient and reliable service aimed at meeting the needs of its clients, especially those in the Jamaican diaspora. Fly Jamaica Airways will operate four flights weekly from Kingston and services will include two checked bags, free meals on all flights and service in all cabins. Plans for Toronto, Guyana flights "Initially, we will fly to New York; however, plans are in the pipeline to also fly to Toronto and also Guyana. Full service will also be offered, especially on our long flights when passengers will get a full meal. We are also competitive in terms of our prices," Tai said. Tai revealed plans to acquire an additional aircraft by year-end to bring its fleet to two. The company, which already owns a Boeing 757 aircraft, came under heavy scrutiny and was thoroughly inspected by the JCAA to ensure that the required support systems and services were in place. Fly Jamaica currently employs more than 60 Jamaicans and will look to expand its crew complement with the additional aircraft. Fly Jamaica Airways has created history as it is the first airline in Jamaica that has gone through the detailed regulations from scratch. Normally, an airline would take three to five years to meet these requirements. However, the airline has accomplished this feat in a relatively short time. Speaking at the launch at the Devonshire in St Andrew on Wednesday, Transport Minister Dr Omar Davies expressed pleasure with the success of the initiative amid the gloom and doom of the world economy. "This is an example of how Jamaicans can work together. This venture will reduce the challenge of travelling between Jamaica and Guyana," Davies said. For more information visit www.fly-jamaica.com or call 1-855-4 flyjam (359526). Jamaica Gleaner